Trial emphasis marks big shift

By ALLAN KATZ 8-I 8-1-73

The close of the second week of the pinball trial has seen a major shift in emphasis from Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison to allegations that former Police Supt. Joseph I. Giarrusso took approximately $30,000 from illegal pinball interests.

The allegations by the managing partners in TAC Amusement Co. that they sent bribe money to Giarrusso between 1968 and 1970 through his brother have grabbed public attention in a trial which had been expected to center on the guilt or innocence of Garrison. The district attorney is charged with accepting bribes to protect illegal pinball gambling.

Garrison, along with pinball executives Robert Nims and John Aruns Callery, is charged with conspiring through the giving and taking of bribes to protect pinball gambling.

THE MAJOR testimony in the trial so far is that of John Elms Jr. and Lawrence Lagarde Sr. of TAC Amusement that they had a separate bribery scheme going with Giarrusso.

Earlier in the week, Lagarde testified Giarrusso was the "big man at Tulane and Broad" so far as TAC was concerned. Even Garrison looked surprised when Lagarde dropped his bombshell.

Yesterday, Elms, under cross-examination from Garrison's attorney, said the courier who brought the money to the former police superintendent was Harold "Hap" Giarrusso, a brother who had worked for years in the Police Department traffic division before going to work for TAC.

U.S. Atty. Gerald J. Gallinghouse, in questioning Lagarde and Elms, has not dug deeply into details of their alleged bribery of Giarrusso, apparently saving that for a session of the federal grand jury set for 10 a.m. Sept. 13.

APART FROM Elms' naming of Harold Giarrusso as courier in the alleged bribery scheme of Joseph Giarrusso, yesterday's major testimony came from former police Vice Squad chief Robert Frey and Metropolitan Crime Commission Executive Director Aaron Kohn.

The government, led by Gallinghouse, only learned of the alleged bribes of Joseph Giarrusso just before the trial began Aug. 20 when Lagarde and Elms agreed to cooperate with the authorities and admitted to the second

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bribery attempt in the course of questioning.

In Frey's testimony yesterday, he told of being brought into the pinball protection scheme by his trusted friend and mentor, Frederick A. Soule Sr.

Soule, who was head of the Vice Squad prior to Frey's tenure, has told previously of how he brought Frey into the payoff ring.

FREY TESTIFIED Soule told him that Mayor Moon Landrieu, Police Supt. Clarence Giarrusso and Garrison were all taking money to protect pinballs and that Frey would lose his job if he didn't cooperate.

Frey says he has no reason to believe either Landrieu or Clarence Giarrusso ever got anything from the pinball interests. He also said he believes he was betrayed by Soule, whom he had admired.

Frey said he should have thrown Soule out of his office when the bribery was first mentioned.

Kohn testified Garrison had been informed of illegal pinball gambling by the Metropolitan Crime Commission but never acted to bring it to a halt.

Under cross-examination, Kohn denied he has a dislike for Garrison. "I think he's a pretty sick man and I can't have a dislike for a sick man," Kohn said. Hearing Kohn's comment, Garrison smiled.

RELATIVELY little of the testimony in the first two weeks of the trial directly connected Garrison with the pinball interests.

Elms testified yesterday he gave Garrison a campaign contribution at a face-to-face meeting in 1969 of either $1,000 or $1,500 when the DA won reelection. Elms also said he gave a contribution to another candidate who is now a Criminal District Court judge, Charles Ray Ward.

Garrison won in the first primary in 1969, running ahead of Harry Connick. Ward ran a weak third in that race.

The government's case against Garrison is expected to take shape next week with the playing of tapes alleged to be conversations between government informer Pershing Gervais and Garrison.

The trial resumes after the Labor Day weekend at 10 a.m. Tuesday.